

WRP Local Assistance Program

Summary of Activities January 2003 – May 2004

Introduction

In July 2003, Environment Now (EN) initiated the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP) Local Assistance Program (LAP) to provide technical assistance to local agencies and community organizations on wetlands preservation and restoration projects. The program is funded with grants from the Coastal Conservancy and the National Marine Fisheries Service. The LAP focuses on several key areas: increasing local involvement in the WRP, building the capacity of local agencies and nonprofit organizations to undertake wetlands projects, and increasing outreach and education to local stakeholders. Examples of LAP activities are provided below, followed by a list of trainings and workshops that have been held and a list of organizations served by the LAP since January 2003.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance to local agencies and community organizations on wetlands preservation and restoration projects provided through the LAP ranges from project concept development, design, budgeting and funding source assistance to the organization and facilitation of stakeholder meetings, site tours and linking local and regional partners to share expertise. The following are examples of LAP technical assistance projects.

- ***Urban Stream Daylighting and Restoration.*** Daylighting of urban streams buried in storm drains, particularly in such intensely developed landscapes as Los Angeles County, provides an opportunity to restore wetland and riparian resources long thought lost. The LAP coordinator has been working with North East Trees to develop, fund and implement several urban stream restoration projects in Los Angeles County.
- ***Orange Coast River Park project.*** The LAP coordinator is working with the Orange Coast River Park Committee to achieve a unified vision, management structure, funding coordination and outreach initiatives. In support of development of the Orange Coast River Park, the LAP coordinator conducts field tours, helps identify funding sources for project components, provides input and critique of proposals and projects for the various landowners and stakeholders, organizes agendas and speakers for quarterly project partnership meetings, and identified potential management structures for cooperative management.
- ***Santa Barbara Creeks.*** The LAP Coordinator serves on technical advisory committees for development of restoration projects on several Santa Barbara creeks. The coordinator has helped develop work plans and budgets, secure funding, and resolve conflicts between project stakeholders. The LAP coordinator also worked with various agencies and organizations to create a strategy to fund and develop an integrated planning and restoration program for the Rincon Creek watershed (which straddles the Santa Barbara and Ventura county line).

Outreach and Education

The LAP provides education and outreach to local agencies, nonprofit organizations and other local stakeholders through the activities of the county task forces, wetlands site visits, speakers and training opportunities. Local and regional workshops organized by the LAP provide education and outreach as well as capacity building for local groups to take on and participate in wetlands restoration and conservation efforts. (See list of trainings in next section.)

- ***Wetland Site Visits.*** In support of the development of new restoration projects and planning efforts and management of ongoing projects, LAP coordinators organize site visits with project proponents and leads. These field tours help connect local agencies and nonprofits working on related projects, identify priority sites for acquisition and restoration, review possible restoration alternatives, and ensure that wetland and riparian resources are included in watershed management and land use planning documents.
- ***County Task Forces.*** The LAP coordinators assist the County Task Forces by organizing meetings, speakers and field trips and providing information on available resources. The coordinators also use the Task Force meetings as a forum for project and planning participation by interested stakeholders. For example, in one task force the LAP coordinator organized a “Lessons-Learned” speaker series in which local project managers presented their projects and shared any opportunities and challenges encountered.

Increasing Local Involvement

The LAP is working to increase local awareness of wetland conservation needs and expand participation in wetland and watershed preservation and restoration efforts. In addition to WRP County Task Force support, the LAP allows regular participation and representation of the WRP on local planning and restoration initiatives. The following examples illustrate the range of efforts to establish and support local involvement.

- ***Upper Santa Clara River Watershed Working Group.*** As a follow on to the March 2003 Santa Clara Watershed Workshop, the LAP coordinator convened a strategic acquisition group in April of 2003 that is focusing on protecting the biological resources of the Upper Santa Clara Watershed. The group has developed an acquisition plan for securing a wildlife linkage connecting the Angeles and Los Padres National Forests, across the Santa Clara River Valley. The group has also been awarded three USFWS grants for education and planning in the upper watershed.
- ***Agriculture and wetlands:*** The LAP coordinator is working with various stakeholders including the Farm Bureau and County to foster WRP presence in agricultural and rural inland regions of San Diego County. The LAP assisted Sustainable Conservation and the Mission Resources Conservation District to apply for funding for an innovative wetlands permitting program in the San Luis Rey River watershed. The LAP coordinator assisted RWQCB staff in its creation of a watershed coordinator program for irrigated agriculture in Santa Barbara County.

- ***Binational Cooperation in Tijuana River Watershed.*** The U.S.-Mexico Border is a unique component of San Diego County. The LAP coordinator is working to increase binational cooperation on wetlands projects and education in the Tijuana River watershed.
- ***North Santa Monica Bay Watersheds Task Force.*** The LAP coordinator is working with the Advisory Implementation Committee of this task force to develop a regional watershed implementation plan to address water quality issues of the North Santa Monica Bay region. The effort is focused to serve multiple purposes of preserving and improving habitat while meeting regulatory compliance standards for TMDLs, NPDES and AB 885.

Trainings, Workshop and Field Tours

- ***Funding Workshop.*** January 2003. This workshop was presented as a joint Orange County/Los Angeles County Task Force Meeting to alert the Task Forces to upcoming grant opportunities. Over 100 people attended from both Orange and Los Angeles Counties. A similar workshop was held for Ventura and Santa Barbara counties.
- ***Upper Santa Clara River Watershed Education Workshop.*** March 2003. The two-day workshop consisted of a tour of the upper and lower watershed, and an education forum. The purpose of the workshop was to educate the WRP Managers' Group on the upper watershed, its biological and hydrological resources, and the threats to these resources. Approximately 65 people attended representing eight state, federal, and local agencies and numerous community-based organizations and businesses.
- ***Sustainable Building Workshop.*** May 2003. This day-long workshop focused on the basics of evaluating, designing, and building sustainable interpretive centers: environmental benefits, cost benefit analysis, and funding opportunities. The workshop included panel discussions in the morning, lunch with keynote speaker Manuel Mollinedo of the City of Los Angeles, and afternoon tours of sustainable sites. Approximately 100 people from the five WRP coastal counties attended.
- ***Treatment Wetland Agency Workshops.*** October and December 2003. LAP staff assisted the Coastal Conservancy in organizing two Treatment Wetland Workshops, one for agency representatives and the WRP Managers Group and one for municipalities and the general public. These workshops explored the issues of the habitat value of treatment wetlands. Approximately 75 people from federal, state, and local agencies attended the agency workshop and approximately 200 people attended the public workshop.
- ***Santa Barbara County Fish Passage Priorities.*** December 2003. This two-day field tour and workshop was held to discuss and establish criteria to prioritize local fish passage improvement projects along the south coast of Santa Barbara County. The workshop was the first component of a project led by the Santa Barbara County Water Agency to plan and permit six or more barrier improvement projects. 60 people from across the region, as well as a number of experts from Northern California attended.

- ***Upper Newport Bay Restoration Field Tour.*** January 2004. The Upper Newport Bay restoration field tour consisted of a tour of restoration sites and discussion by restoration ecologists of methods for controlling reintroduction of invasive plant species after restoration, recruitment of volunteers and methods for non-native eradication. The meeting was attended by 20 people from Orange and San Diego counties.
- ***California Fish Passage Workshops.*** February 2004. The workshop included a tour of restoration sites and discussion by restoration ecologists of methods for controlling reintroduction of invasive plant species after restoration, recruitment of volunteers and methods for non-native eradication. The meeting was attended by 20 people from Orange and San Diego counties.
- ***Strategic Planning for Environmental Education in Ventura County.*** February 2004. The workshop focused on hands-on environmental education programs in Ventura County and opportunities for collaboration and reaching new audiences. The workshop featured presentations by Oxnard City Corps, Concerned Resource and Environmental Workers (CREW) and Wishtoyo Foundation. The meeting was attended by 46 representatives from 35 agencies and organizations.
- ***California Fish Passage Workshops.*** February 2004. This two part workshop on fish passage was sponsored by the Wetlands Recovery Project and For the Sake of the Salmon in Ventura. Topics included fish passage project policy, coordination and funding, evaluation and prioritization, and design and implementation. 32 people attended.
- ***Santa Monica Mountains Forum.*** February 2004. The Forum provided an overview of resources and key issues for the region, presentations by the largest agencies and NGOs on their projects and priorities, and a discussion of recommendations for setting Wetlands Recovery Project priorities for the region. The meeting was attended by 46 representatives from 35 agencies and organizations.
- ***Hill Canyon Constructed Wetlands Tour.*** February 2004. This tour and presentation was organized for the Ventura County WRP Task Force. The tour, conducted by James Gorham, restoration ecologist with CH2M Hill, included considerations and discussion of elements involved in design and establishment of constructed wetlands. The tour was attended by 18 people.
- ***Environmental Compliance and Permitting Workshop:*** March 2004. The workshop addressed the “nuts and bolts” of the environmental permitting process for coastal and riparian wetland restoration and provided basic tools needed to get projects approved and permitted. 71 people from across the WRP region attended.
- ***Aliso Creek Watershed Workshop.*** March 2004. The workshop detailed planning and restoration efforts throughout the watershed and included discussion of coordination of efforts and avenues for public participation. A map of Aliso Creek watershed projects was produced for the workshop. Approximately 20 people attended the workshop from agencies and nonprofits in Orange County.

- ***The California Rapid Assessment Method (CRAM) Workshop.*** May 2004. This workshop, organized by the LAP and the Ventura County Streams and Wetlands Policy Advisory Team, provided an opportunity for the Ventura and Santa Barbara WRP Task Forces members and other interested stakeholders to comment on the development of the California Rapid Assessment Method. The workshop was attended by 42 people from 30 agencies and organizations.
- ***Prado Treatment Wetlands Field Tour.*** May 2004. This field program included a tour of the Prado treatment wetlands by the habitat restoration manager for the Orange County Water District and discussion of the impacts of treatment wetlands maintenance and operation needs on habitat value. The workshop was attended by 24 people from agencies and organizations in Orange County.

Organizations Served

In the past 18 months, the LAP has served approximately 210 groups, as follows:

- Local government (l) 49
- Community organizations (c) 110
- Federal (f) 15
- State (s) 26
- Other (o) 10

A complete list of organizations served is provided below.

Organization (Type*)

Agua Hedionda Lagoon Foundation (c)	California State Assembly Member Carol Liu's Office (s)
Altadena Foothills Conservancy (c)	California State Assembly Member Juan Vargas (s)
Aquarium of the Pacific (c)	California State Assembly Member Pavley's office (s)
Aquatic Adventures (c)	California State Senator Denise Ducheny (s)
Austin Val Verde Foundation (c)	California State Senator Sheila James Kuehl's office (s)
Ballona Creek Task Force (s, l, c)	Calleguas Creek Watershed Management Plan steering committee (c)
Ballona Wetlands Foundation (c)	Camrosa Water District (l)
Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation (c)	Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition (c)
Bolsa Chica Conservancy (c)	Cate School Corporation (o)
Bolsa Chica Land Trust (c)	Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (s)
Bonsall Conservancy (c)	City of Carlsbad (l)
Boys and Girls Club of Ventura (c)	City of Carpinteria, Parks and Recreation (l)
Cachuma Resource Conservation District (l)	City of Chula Vista (l)
Calabasas Engineering and Public Works (l)	City of Costa Mesa, Fairview Park Administration (l)
California Avocado Commission (o)	City of El Cajon, Community Development Corporation (c)
California Coastal Commission (s)	City of Encinitas, Engineering Services (l)
California Department of Fish and Game (s)	City of Imperial Beach (l)
California Department of Parks and Recreation (s)	City of Laguna Niguel (l)
California Department of Transportation (s)	
California Department of Water Resources (s)	
California Regional Environmental Education Community (CREEC) (s)	

City of Long Beach, El Dorado Nature Center (l)
 City of Los Angeles, Recreation and Parks
 Department (l)
 City of Newport Beach (l)
 City of Oceanside (l)
 City of Oxnard (l)
 City of San Diego (l)
 Planning Commission, City Heights
 Department of Water
 Storm Water
 Watershed Programs
 City of Santa Barbara, Creeks Division (l)
 City of Santee (l)
 City of Tecate, BC (l)
 City of Thousand Oaks Public Works Department (l)
 City of Tijuana, BC (l)
 City of Ventura, Public Works Department (l)
 Clean Water Action (c)
 Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council (c)
 Community Environmental Council (c)
 Conception Coast Project (c)
 Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency (c)
 Cottonwood Creek Conservancy (c)
 County of Los Angeles (l)
 Supervisor Yaroslavsky's office
 DPW, Environmental Programs Division
 Department of Parks and Recreation
 Forestry Division
 County of Orange (l)
 Harbors, Beaches and Parks
 Resource Development and Management
 Division
 County of San Diego (l)
 Agriculture Inspector
 Education
 Environmental Health
 MSCP
 Parks and Recreation
 Public Works
 Supervisor Greg Cox's Office
 County of Santa Barbara (l)
 First District Supervisor Naomi Schwartz
 Second District Supervisor Susan Rose
 Flood Control District
 Parks Department
 Planning and Development
 Water Agency, Project Clean Water
 Weed Management Area (Agricultural
 Commissioner)
 County of Ventura (l)
 First District Supervisor Steve Bennett
 Second District Supervisor Linda Parks
 Parks Department
 Resource Management Agency, Planning
 Division
 Watershed Protection District

Planning Division
 Dominguez Watershed Advisory Council (s, l, c)
 Earth Island Institute (c)
 EarthCorps (c)
 Environmental Defense (Water) (c)
 Environmental Health Coalition (c)
 Escondido Creek Conservancy (c)
 For the Sake of the Salmon (c)
 Friends of Annondale Canyon (c)
 Friends of Colorado Lagoon (c)
 Friends of Harbors Beaches and Parks (c)
 Friends of Hazard Park Wetland (c)
 Friends of Shipley Nature Center (c)
 Friends of the Santa Clara River (c)
 Fundacion La Puerta, Tecate (c)
 Goleta Slough Management Committee (c)
 Growing Solutions (c)
 Heal the Bay (c)
 Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy (c)
 IBWC Citizens Advisory Group (c)
 Instituto Mexicano de Tecnologia del Agua (IMTA)
 (f)
 International Boundary & Water Commission
 (IBWC) (f)
 International Community Foundation (c)
 Keep Sespe Wild Committee (c)
 La Jolla Band of Indians (l)
 Laguna Beach Water Quality Department (l)
 Lakeside Historical Society (c)
 Land Trust for Santa Barbara County (c)
 Latino Issues Forum (c)
 League of Women Voters (c)
 LIFE (c)
 Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Foundation (c)
 Malibu City Clean Water Program (l)
 Malibu Coastal Land Conservancy (c)
 Malibu Public Works (l)
 Malibu Watershed Advisory Council (o)
 Matilija Coalition (o)
 Matilija Dam plan formulation committee (c)
 Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
 (l)
 Mexican American Opportunities Foundation (c)
 Mission Creek Restoration Partnership (c)
 Mission Resource Conservation District (s)
 Mountains Restoration Trust (c)
 National Hispanic Environmental Council (c)
 National Park Service Southern California Field
 Office (f)
 National Parks Service, Santa Monica Mountains
 National Recreation Area (f)
 Natural Resources Conservation Service (f)
 Nature Trust of the Santa Monica Mountains (c)
 NOAA Fisheries (f)
 Northeast Trees (c)
 Ojai Valley Land Conservancy (c)

Orange County Water District (l)
 Ormond Beach Observers (o)
 Ormond Beach Task Force (c)
 Oxnard City Corps (c)
 Pacific Institute for Studies in Development and
 Env. (c)
 Padre Dam Municipal Water District (l)
 Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy (c)
 Palos Verdes Peninsula/South Bay Audubon (c)
 Paradise Creek Education Park Inc. (c)
 Port of San Diego (l)
 Preserve Calaveras (c)
 Pronatura (c)
 Public Citizen (c)
 Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation
 Authority (l)
 RECON, Consultants (o)
 Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles
 (s)
 Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego (s)
 Regional Water Quality Control Board, Santa Ana (s)
 Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica
 Mountains (l)
 Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (s)
 Rivers Foundation of the Americas (c)
 Rose Canyon Recreation Council (o)
 San Diego Association of Governments (l)
 San Diego Audubon Society (c)
 San Diego BayKeeper (c)
 San Diego County Water Authority (l)
 San Diego Foundation (c)
 San Diego Natural History Museum (c)
 San Diego River Park Foundation (c)
 San Diego River Park Lakeside Conservancy (c)
 San Diego Zoo (c)
 San Dieguito River Park (c)
 San Francisco Estuary Institute (c)
 San Gabriel Mountains Regional Conservancy (c)
 San Jose Creek stakeholders group (c)
 San Luis Rey River Watershed Council (l)
 Santa Barbara Audubon Society (c)
 Santa Barbara ChannelKeeper (c)
 Santa Barbara City College (l)
 Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (c)
 Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission (s)
 Santa Monica Baykeeper (c)
 Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (s)
 Santa Susana Mountain Park Association (c)
 Saviers Road Design Team (c)
 Sespe Institute (o)
 Sierra Club (c)
 Sister Schools of San Diego (c)
 South Coast Wildlands Project (c)
 South Orange County Watershed Conservancy (c)
 Southern California Marine Institute (c)

Southern California Steelhead Coalition (c)
 Southern California Watershed Alliance (c)
 Southern Steelhead Recovery Team (c)
 Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association (c)
 Southwestern College (o)
 Surfrider Foundation (c)
 Sustainable Conservation (c)
 Sweetwater Authority (l)
 Technology Associates International Cooperation (o)
 Terra Peninsular (c)
 The CREW (c)
 The Nature Conservancy (c)
 The Ocean Institute (c)
 Tierra Miguel Foundation (c)
 Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve
 (f)
 TreePeople (c)
 Tri-County Fish Team (l)
 Trout Unlimited (c)
 Trust for Public Land (c)
 U.C. Cooperative Extension (s)
 U.C. Irvine (s)
 U.C. Natural Reserve System, Coal Oil Point
 Reserve (s)
 U.C. Sea Grant Program (o)
 U.C.S.B. Museum of Systematics and Ecology /
 Natural Areas program (s)
 U.C.S.D., Dept. of Sociology (l)
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (f)
 U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (f)
 U.S. Congress Representative Bob Filner (f)
 U.S. Congress Representative Henry A. Waxman's
 office (f)
 U.S. Congress Representative Lois Capps's Office (f)
 U.S. Congress Representative Susan Davis (f)
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Border
 Water Team, Water Div. (f)
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (f)
 U.S. Forest Service, Angeles National Forest (f)
 United Water Conservation District (l)
 Universidad Autonoma de Baja California, UABC
 (o)
 University of San Diego, Transborder Institute (o)
 Ventura CoastKeeper. (c)
 Ventura County Resource Conservation District (l)
 Ventura Unified School District (l)
 Watershed Management Council (c)
 West and Central Basins Municipal Water Districts
 (s)
 Western Alliance for Nature (c)
 Whittier Narrows Nature Center Associates (c)
 Windows-on-our-Waters (c)
 Wishtoyo Foundation (c)
 World Integrated Sustainable Habitats (c)